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Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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ORIENTATION CONFERENCE

REF: BUCHAREST 4016; STATE 165462

IN ADDITION TO BRIEFING PROVIDED TODAY BY CU/EE, AMB. BARNES AND DCM VIETS, EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO STRESS FOLLOWING POINTS FOR GRANTEES' CONSIDERATIONS:
(1) THE MOST IMPORTANT THING A GRANTEE CAN BRING WITH HIM TO ROMANIA, ASIDE FROM HIS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, IS PEACE CORPS ETHOS. HE WILL HAVE TO ADJUST PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS TO POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC REALITIES HERE AND RIDE OUT FRUSTRATIONS OF DAILY LIFE WHERE STANDARD OF LIVING SIMPLY NOT COMPRABLE WITH U.S. ONCE OVER INITIAL CRUNCH OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND LOGISTICAL ADJUSTMENT, HE WILL FIND ENVIRONMENT CHALLENGING, PEOPLE FRIENDLY AND COUNTRY ITSELF BEAUTIFUL. OF ELEVEN LECTURERS HERE IN 1975/76 THREE ELECTED TO SIGN UP FOR SECOND TOUR AND THREE OTHERS WERE ALREADY SERVING THEIR SECOND. WE NOTE FROM APPLICATIONS THAT ONLY ONE GRANTEE IS MARRIED, WHICH WILL MAKE LIFE LESS COMPLICATED FOR ALL CONCERNED.

(2) BEST PREPARATION FOR EACH GRANTEE IS TO STUDY REPORT OF HIS PREDECESSOR AND IMMERSE HIMSELF IN LANGUAGE, HISTORY
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AND CULTURE OF ROMANIA.

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(3) ALL GRANTEES ARE ENCOURAGED TO WRITE THEIR HOST INSTITUTIONS IN ADVANCE AND TO DIRECT QUESTIONS NOT ANSWERED AT DEPT. BRIEFING TO CAO ROBERT TIMS, AMCONGEN(BUCH), APO NEW YORK 09757.

(4) HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT SINCE CHANGES MAY BE MADE TO REFLECT CHANGE IN MARITAL STATUS OF INCOMING LECTURERS. BUT PROSPECTS OVERALL LOOK BETTER THAN LAST YEAR, PARTICULARLY FOR GIVAN AND RUDES WHO HAVE BEEN PROMISED FLATS IN NEW BUILDING IN BUCHAREST. MOST APARTMENTS HAVE PHONES, TV AND RADIO, ALL HAVE BASIC KITCHEN AND BATH FACILITIES ALTHOUGH SOME ARE PLAGUED BY LIMITED WATER SUPPLY. FURNITURE RANGES FROM SHABBY GENTEEL TO NONDESCRIPT MODERN.

(5) GROCERY SHOPPING CAN BE TIME-CONSUMING AND EXHAUSTING AND SINGLE GRANTEES MAY WANT TO CONSIDER EATING MOST MEALS AT FACULTY OR STUDENT FACILITIES WHERE MEALS ARE CHEAP IF MONOTONOUS. LOCAL FOOD PURCHASES CAN BE SUPPLEMENTED WITH ORDERS FROM EXPORT FIRMS IN DENMARK.

(6) MOST GRANTEES WILL SHOULDER HEAVIER TEACHING LOAD THAN CUSTOMARY IN U.S., ABOUT 12-14 HOURS AVERAGE, ON BASIS OF TWO HOURS CREDIT FOR EACH LECTURE HOUR AND ONE FOR ONE CLASSROOM TEACHING.

(7) UNIVERSITY OFFICE SPACE ALLOTTED TO AMERICANS IS USUALLY LIMITED OR NONEXISTENT, ACCESS TO MIMEOGRAPH EQUIPMENT LIMITED AND LIBRARY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE COLLECTIONS QUITE SMALL. EMBASSY URGES DEPT. CONSIDER INCREASING GRANTEE BOOK ALLOWANCE SO LECTURERS CAN BRING MULTIPLE COPIES OF BASIC TEXTS.

(8) CONTACTS AND RELATIONS WITH ROMANIAN FACULTY AND STUDENTS ARE CIRCUMSCRIBED BY CLOSED SOCIETY CONCEPT HERE. PAST EXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN MIXED BAG, BUT GENERALLY MORE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE OUTSIDE BUCHAREST.

(9) LECTURERS INTERESTED IN PERSONAL RESEARCH WILL FIND ACCESS TO SOURCES AND MATERIAL DIFFICULT, BUT WE HOPE FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BETTER THINGS THIS YEAR.

(10) AS IN PAST, EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE LIMITED BACKUP FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO HELP GRANTEES COPE WITH PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS AND LIVING CONDITIONS, BUT IN FINAL ANALYSIS A CHEERFUL DETERMINATION TO MUDDLE THROUGH IS BEST BET FOR SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN ROMANIA.

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(11) OVERALL PICTURE OF LIFE IN ROMANIA PROBABLY BEST
SUMMED UP DURING LECTURER CONFERENCE IN BRASOV LAST MARCH
WHEN GRANTEES TOOK POSITIVE VIEW OF EXPERIENCE DESPITE
CULTURAL STRESS AND DAILY FRUSTRATIONS.
SCISSORS

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